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Recommended Citation

"Press release 2" (2019). *Postville Project Documents*. 195.
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March 6, 2013 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **MARK THE DATE**

POSTVILLE IMMIGRATION RAID: 5 YEARS LATER

Public invited to remember tragic event

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa - On Friday, May 10, 2013 a gathering commemorating the Fifth Anniversary of the Postville, Iowa Immigration Raid will take place in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The purpose of the event is to remember the 389 persons who were arrested on May 12, 2008, to reconcile with those who contributed to the injustices, and to advocate for the reform of immigration policies.

The event will begin at 12:00 p.m. with a remembrance ritual on the sidewalk in front of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, 111 7th Ave. SE in Cedar Rapids.

A "Walk for Justice" at 12:30 p.m. to Immaculate Conception Church, 857 3rd Ave. SE, will follow. Here an interfaith prayer for reconciliation and a call for reform of our immigration policies will take place at 1:15 p.m. The assembly is being planned by a wide coalition of those involved in the response to the raid as well as those affected. It will include immigrants, who were part of the 2008 raid, church representatives who ministered to the immigrants and their families, lawyers who saw the injustice of the system, as well as, others who are concerned about immigration reform.

Five years ago on May 12, 2008, the largest single-site immigration raid at the time in the history of the United States occurred in Postville, Iowa. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials raided Agriprocessors, the main producer of kosher meat in the United States, handcuffed immigrants and bused them to the National Cattle Congress in Waterloo, Iowa. Most detainees were charged with identity theft and were shipped to prisons across the country where they spent five months before being deported. Immigration charges against the CEO of Agriprocessors were dropped. In a matter of hours on that fateful day, Postville lost a significant amount of its population and worse yet; hundreds of families were torn apart.

The location in front of the federal court house was chosen both because of the court's role in the raid as well as because of the significance of the event to the on-going national conversation about immigration.

For more information about the fifth anniversary commemoration and call for the reform of our immigration policy, as well as for resources for organizing events in communities or congregations to coincide with this commemoration, please contact Rockne Cole at rocknecole@gmail.com or (319) 358-1900 or Sister Mary McCauley, BVM, at mmccauley@bvmcong.org or (563) 583-8989.

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